

The Honorable Melissa A. Hart
U.S. Representative of Pennsylvania (2001–2007)

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

Learning the District

Representative Hart discusses her thoughts on understanding the needs of her House district.
Interview recorded September 30, 2019

And I think when you look at what people really want, it's security, it's—you know, they want to have financial security, they want to have a safe environment, they want to have—well, I think environmental issues were always important and in the communities that were industrial we were fully aware of that. And one of the issues that I worked on very, very hard was brownfield redevelopment because we had plants that had closed. And I had worked with Carnegie Mellon University because they had a brownfield redevelopment institute and so I was very well schooled on the things that needed to be done in order to redevelop these. People were really interested in that because if their town had a mill and the mill was closed the last thing they wanted to look at every day was a mill. You know, unless it was going to open again. And so we, we were successful in working on brownfield redevelopment issues both on the state level and on the federal level. Those are things that matter in towns that I represented. And you know, I don't think—like, again, it goes back to when I wake up in the morning do I think, "Gee, is the person who represents me a Republican or a Democrat?" No. Is the person who represents me addressing the issues I care about—if they're even thinking about that at all?